EDITORIAL NOTES

EDUCATIONAL PROBLEMS AS SEEN BY UNIVERSITY PRESIDENTS

The reports of college and university presidents contain much which is of interest chiefly to their respective institutions; but they all devote more or less attention to the treatment of general educational problems which are of interest to teachers in secondary schools and all students of education.

THE COLLEGE COURSE

The struggle between the liberal and professional work is still going on. This year the Presidents of Yale and Cornell and the Acting President of the Massachusetts Institute of Technology approach the subject from different angles. President Hadley discusses the reason why the Sheffield Scientific School has nearly doubled its members within seven years, while the Academic Department has remained nearly stationary in size. The reason for this does not seem to lie in the fact that Sheffield affords work in science and the Academic Department in the humanities; for the academic student can now elect about as much work in science as the Sheffield student, while the Sheffield student has to take more work in the humanities than is required in many colleges of Arts. The reason seems to lie rather, President Hadley argues, in the fact that Sheffield has a three-year course. Social and traditional arguments would make it very difficult to reduce the academic course to three years but President Hadley favors the introduction of more professional work in law, medicine, and theology into the college course. At Yale the student may now take professional work for about one year of his course. President Hadley would make it possible for the student to begin work in preparation for his profession after the close of the sophomore year. President Schurman, pointing out the threefold function of the Arts course (1) for the few who later go to professional schools, (2) for the professional training of teachers in the subjects taught in the college course, (3) as a preparation for the life of business, journalism, public service, suggests that it is desirable to have definite professional advice for the organization of the work of the three groups of students. This means practically that the work of the last two years should point more definitely than now toward the real work of the student's career. The gain in seriousness and interest is not merely a matter of intellectual advantage; it is likewise a moral question.

While these university presidents are discussing methods of making the college course more serious and fruitful it is interesting to find in the report of Acting President Noyes of the Massachusetts Institute of Technology the proposal that by the side of the present four-year course there be organized a five-year course. This course would give the first three years to

general science training, including work in the humanities, in the natural sciences, and in the fundamental physical and chemical sciences. The object would be to give the student who can afford the additional year a broader training before entering upon the last two years of more technical engineering courses. The technological school feels the need of a broader training to meet the larger requirements of present life; the college, which was in the first place a professional school for the training of ministers and has now in so many instances lost in earnestness as it has gained breadth, is seeking closer relation to the various lines of professional work.

EDUCATION FOR BUSINESS

Harvard has announced the organization of courses in preparation for business. These are to be treated analogously to courses in law, medicine, and theology, inasmuch as they are to be made graduate work. The president of Tufts College recommends also the establishment of work along this line, although he believes it may more desirably be made a part of the undergraduate course. He thinks it unwise to defer entrance upon active business so long as would be made necessary by a graduate course, claiming that the business man needs more additional training in the actual processes of business than the lawyer needs in practice. It is perhaps fortunate that both these two theories as to the best location of the work in preparation for business should receive actual trial. It may very likely prove that there is room for both. In any case the general idea of professional training for business has, we believe, a much larger value than that of fitting individuals to do their work more efficiently, however important this may be. The larger value is that of supplying a professional standard for business success other than the merely pecuniary standard. There is no reason why the merchant, the manager of a railroad, or the manufacturer should not feel the same intellectual interest in his complex problems which is felt by the lawyer in his. And there is no reason why there should not be as definite recognition for the man who meets these problems successfully, quite independent of the pecuniary reward, as there now is for the successful physician or capable architect. President Eliot has pointed out during the year, in public addresses, that our present method of paying enormous salaries for our captains of industry has been by no means an unqualified success. It has not resulted in the best type of management. Those who believe in professional standards for teachers, lawyers, ministers, will welcome the introduction of an intellectual standard for business success.

CONSULAR SERVICE

By a recent act of Congress and order of the President positions in the consular service will now be upon a basis of training and efficiency rather than upon political favoritism. Several universities are planning to meet the demand for training for this service. Yale and Columbia have been considering a joint arrangement; George Washington University is preparing plans. The University of Chicago has

issued a circular of courses designed to meet the government requirements. High-school principals may well bring this to the notice of boys who are considering their future occupations.

METHODS OF TEACHING

Several of the presidents consider more or less fully the problem of making teaching more vital and serious. President Butler of Columbia remarks that less stress is now laid upon differences of opinion as to the relative value and importance of the different subjects, and more on the effective presentation to students of the subject-matter in any given part of the field of knowledge. Referring to the abandonment of the old slavish recitation method, and noting that the lecture method when pursued exclusively is about as bad, he calls attention to the advantages of the laboratory method which has become established in the natural sciences and is probably capable in its general conception of extension into the other subjects. The three advantages of this method are the contact with concrete facts, its adaptability to individual differences among students, and the close personal association which it promotes between teacher and student. The best teachers of history and literature have already come to use certain aspects of the method, but there is undoubtedly much more that might be done to secure these same results in other subjects than the natural sciences. For example, if the teaching of history should have its own room with its tables for work, its sources, its regular period during which the instructor would go from student to student as he does in the chemical laboratory, would not the study be far more effective?

THE COLLEGE COURSE FOR WOMEN

During the year from a number of sources the query has been raised as to whether our present college course for women is the best that can be made. Undoubtedly at the outset of higher education for women it was necessary to make the courses essentially the same in the women's colleges as in those for men. In the coeducational colleges there has been a great difference in the prevailing election of courses. Courses in political economy and physical sciences are taken more largely by men, courses in literature and language by women. But so far it has seemed unwise to raise the question whether there might not properly be more fundamental difference in the character of work. Many parents of girls in high schools, we believe, question very seriously whether the whole present organization of work, involving the desire on the part of the girl to keep up with the girls who are in the four-year course for college, is not making a strain upon the girl's system out of proportion to the value of the results reached. And the college course raises many more inquiries. On these two points President Seelye of Smith College comments. The excessive requirements "induce hurried and superficial work in preparation; they protract unduly the period of pupilage; and they have made a higher education more expensive and thereby less accessible, except to the wealthier classes who do not always possess the greatest intellectual

ability, and are more likely to become intellectual degenerates. As most of the ablest men come from the poorer classes, it would be both a public and a private calamity, if it should become harder for poor boys and girls of ability to gain the mental culture they desire. It would be a still more grievous loss if, by postponing the time of graduation, family life should be impaired. The longer marriage is delayed, the less likely men are to marry. A college education should not contribute to the modern tendency to celibacy." The effects on scholarship are even more detrimental than the effects upon economic and social interests. And with reference to the special problem of the education of women the report makes the following significant suggstion:

"The colleges for women, thus far, have been constrained by the desire to demonstrate the capacity of women for a collegiate education to adopt substantially the same requirements for admission as the colleges for men. That demonstration has now been made. For a quarter of a century it has been clearly shown that women can meet as successfully and profitably as men do the highest tests of scholarship. No concessions have been asked to enable them to secure a truly liberal culture on account of their intellectual inferiority. The colleges for women are now in a position to act with greater independence; and they can adopt such regulations as may seem best to secure the mental culture which the college represents, without implying the incompetency of women for a college education. It would seem, therefore, an opportune time for them to give a thorough revision of college requirements, and to determine what changes can be made to liberalize and to improve the quality of the education which these colleges aim to give."

J. H. T.